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relating to Project CORONA

19 June 1958

Review of the WS-117L program indicates that additional THOR-boosted WS-117L vehicles will be required over and above the ten currently authorized. At least nine additional Lockheed vehicles are required to meet a flight schedule of one per month, Nov 58 to Mar 59, inclusive, and two or more per month, April 59 to Oct 59, inclusive. In accordance with discussions, the Air Force is requested to take appropriate action to protect production lead times.

ARPA intends that sufficient vehicles be provided to conduct engineering flights; accomplish currently scheduled bio-astronautic flights; establish confidence in the WS-117L vehicle reliability in view of its possible later use in man-in-space programs and to provide for some special payloads designed to investigate and measure certain suspected space phenomena which may greatly influence future military space activities. AFBMD and Lockheed Missile System Division should provide secure arrangements so that these special payloads can be handled on a sensitive basis. Furthermore, in view of possible international and domestic complications that might result from bio-astronautic experiments with animals, it is desired that strict security be maintained relative to these aspects of the THOR-boosted program.

In connection with possible payloads, it appears that the load-carrying capability of the vehicle system will be taxed. This in turn would dictate low altitude orbits. Suitable technical provisions should be made to meet this requirement.

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Received from Col. Sheppard, A. F. 25661  
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1-SA/PA/DCI  
2-Mr. Kiefer DPS/DCI

3-Cover Officer DPS/DCI

4-SA/PA/DCI Chrono

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